

## GEN. D'ESPEREY, THE MAN WHO FORCED THE BULGARIA TO TERMS

Brilliant French Commander, With a Habit of Breaking Through Impregnable Barriers, Has Never Had a Failure

(The following article by Stephen Laumann, member of French High Commission to the United States and editor of Le Matin, is from the New York Times.)

Gen. Franchet d'Esperey, commander-in-chief of the allied armies in the Balkans, is a happy man. Fortune has never yet ceased to smile on him. At Charleroi, where the French and English were beaten, he was the only allied general who won a victory. He was then in command of the first army corps, made up for the greater part of men from Lille and Flanders. August 21 and 22, while the battle was raging, he was holding the bridges of the Meuse at no great distance from Namur, and it was only toward the evening of the 23d that his troops charged. The issue of the battle, however, was already decided, and several allied corps, which had had a bad start and were in an inferior position both as to numbers and equipment, were forced back.

It was left to General Franchet d'Esperey and to the first army corps to protect the right flank of the Franco-British army, and he achieved that formidable task with extraordinary dash. Attacking the Saxons, who were pressing closely upon him, he threw them into disorder and drove back to the Meuse an enemy division which had succeeded in crossing the river. So furious an attack, so valiant an attitude, were not to be withstood by the Saxons; they stood as if hypnotized, and during the night of the 23d and all of the day of the 24th allowed the entire French forces to pass on unopposed, not daring to interfere.

The enemy commander had to pay a heavy price for the brilliant work on the French general. Von Hausen, one of the most famous generals of the German army, lost his command, and some few weeks later was crossed off the list of that army, the following reason being given:

It was only on August 23 that Von Hausen's Saxon army crossed the Meuse. If better plans had been laid, the crossing of the river could have taken place much more quickly. The delay was a contributory cause to the failure of the German army in the beginning of September, and the German forces marching toward Paris had to be grouped differently.

### KIRCHHEISEN.

On the other hand, the operation brought well deserved promotion to Gen. Franchet d'Esperey, sole victor of the Charleroi engagements. Foch immediately intrusted him with the command of an entire army—the fifth—made up of the 15th, 51st and 10th corps, and a cavalry corps.

On the Marne, where French and English were victorious, Franchet d'Esperey, still the favored of fortune, was the first to win new laurels. He was holding the line to the north of Provins as far as Sezanne, between French and Foch. As early as the morning of September 6, when Joffre gave his famous order to attack, he threw himself with extraordinary fury on the left wing of Von Kluck's army and the right wing of Von Buelow's army, which were both facing him. He pried a wedge between the two armies, took Etampes at the point of the bayonet, threw into disorder everything on his passage, and on the 8th entered Montmirail over a mountain of German dead. The morning of the 9th his aviation service signaled that Kluck and Buelow were retreating. From that time all he had to do was to push forward.

To him belongs the glory of having

been the first to make a breach in the enemy wall. And to him, among all the illustrious heroes of that immortal battle, is due the title of first victor.

After this Gen. Franchet d'Esperey reached the command of army groups only, that is, he occupied the same rank as men like Foch, Castelnau, Fayolle. His name is associated with all the great operations of the great war—Somme, Champagne, Aisne. Finally, in June last, he received a new command, that of the armies of the Orient in the Balkans, and eight short weeks after he landed at Salonika he again covered his name with glory, and the victor of the Meuse, the victor of Montmirail, became the victor of Vardar. He is the first general to have gained a great victory in the Balkan theater of the war, where so much blood has been shed and where it almost seemed as though some evil genius refused to allow the allies a single success. But the charm has been broken.

So much good fortune is certainly not the result of pure chance. Gen. Franchet d'Esperey wins victories because he deserves to win them. He has learned the secret of making the gods of war smile on him. He is a tremendous worker and knows how to make others work. It will doubtless be related some day how the battle that has just been won was fought on the hardest, the most difficult sector of the front—a sector where there are no roads, no depots of equipment, no heavy artillery; a sector said by the Bulgarians to be impregnable—so much so that they only maintained a handful of troops there. In eight weeks Gen. Franchet d'Esperey has had roads made, depots installed, heavy artillery placed in position, and he has organized the system of communications. September 14 he threw his Saxonian and colonial battalions to the assault of the mountains of Bulgaria, just as he had thrown his regiments to the assault of the forests of Montmirail; he made his breach and through this breach led the allied forces that for three years had been marking time on the same mud, condemned to the same inaction.

Gen. Franchet d'Esperey does not only know how to deal with earth and cannon; he also knows how to deal with men. He can make his soldiers do anything, because he knows how to talk to them; he has the ready word that wins the heart of the trooper and today it is with the heart as much as with muscle that battles are won.

There are few chiefs as popular as he is. His men love him, and the feeling is returned. For a long time he was a commanding officer in Algeria, that corner of Africa which has given such glorious names to the French army of today—Gouraud, Mangin, Lyauté, Degouttes—and which is at the same time the cradle of the famous Foreign Legion.

Finally, to all this may be added that Gen. Franchet d'Esperey is still young. So fortune is not through with him yet—there are other victories ahead for him.

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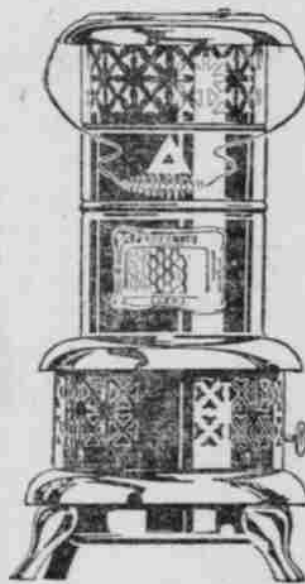
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